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LETTER DATED 29 JANUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 28 January 1998 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, in which the Minister refers to the violations of Iraq's airspace committed by the United States spy plane on the pretext of carrying out an aerial survey for the Special Commission and calls for the use of Iraqi aircraft instead of foreign aircraft in the Special Commission's work.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 28 January 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

We refer to our letter dated 25 September 1997 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/747, annex) concerning the violation of Iraq's airspace by the United States U-2 spy plane on the pretext of carrying out an aerial survey for the Special Commission.

We should like to inform you that this aircraft, which is based in Saudi Arabian territory, has continued its incursions into Iraq's airspace in violation of the country's sovereignty and security. As of the end of December 1997, this aircraft had carried out 390 overflights for a total flight time of 1,716 hours and 4 minutes since its first overflight in August 1991.

The facts that have come to light since this aircraft was first brought into use, which are set forth in our aforementioned letter, and the ill repute the aircraft has acquired from its past espionage activities in various parts of the world make it incumbent upon the United Nations to re-examine the question of continuing to use an aircraft that is being employed by the United States of America in a coercive manner to violate Iraq's airspace and to spy on Iraq for purposes other than those of the Special Commission. Such policies are totally incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as they relate to the respect for the sovereignty of all Member States and non-interference in their internal affairs.

In condemning and deprecating these unwarranted violations of our airspace, we take this opportunity to reaffirm the request that we have constantly reiterated in the 127 letters on this subject we have thus far addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, namely that Iraqi aircraft should be used instead of foreign aircraft in the work of the Special Commission in order to exclude any possibility of such aircraft being for purposes prejudicial to Iraq's sovereignty and security.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq